

UNITED FARMERS OF CANADA

Saskatchewan Section Limited



SWISS SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

Switzerland is one of the best governed, most democratic and most progressive countries in the world. Democracy is a real thing in Switzerland and not merely a name. The people can initiate laws, they can demand a vote or referendum on any important matter. They were one of the few peoples that had a right to vote on the question of going to war. They voted to stay out thus showing their extreme good sense at the time of the Great War.

Switzerland has a population of about 3,880,320 and is composed mostly of German, French and Italian speaking people. About 71 percent speak German; 21 percent French, and a little over 6 percent Italian. The three languages are used in the National Council and are each on an equal footing. All government publications are issued in the three languages.

For political purposes Switzerland is divided into 22 states or cantons as they are called, each of which enjoys complete autonomy except in so far as not specifically limited by the federal constitution.

EXECUTIVE POWER

The Executive Power is in the hands of a federal council of seven members from amongst whom the president of the confederation is elected for one year. The president of Switzerland is really but the chairman of the federal council. He is elected by the United Federal Parliament, that is to say, the National Council and the Council of States.

The Executive Council does not represent one political party, and consequently it is not appointed by a party but by the United Parliament. Once elected, the new member of the Federal Council formally abandons the party to which he previously belonged in parliament. Neither a single member nor the Federal Council as a body depends on the majority of votes in parliament. Even if the Federal Council is in contradiction with the majority in parliament, or if a law for which it had taken the initiative is not accepted by the people, it remains in office.

The only possibility of showing the confidence in the members is given in the re-election for three years, but it has very seldom happened in the history of Switzerland that a member of the Federal Council was not re-elected.

This is a great improvement on our party system which is merely a continuous fight for office. It is not the Cabinet or Federal Council which rules in Switzerland but the people through the parliament. All bills, therefore, are discussed and voted on according to their merit and not according to whether they originate in one party or another.

The Federal Executive is elected for a term of three years, but no two members may belong to the same canton, nor can two members be near relatives, nor can they be a clerical of any church.

LEGISLATIVE POWER

The Legislative Power is exercised collectively by the National Council, and the council of states.

The National Council is composed of members elected within the cantons in the proportion of one to every 20,000 of population. They are elected by Proportional Representation.

The Council of States is composed of two representatives from each canton. They are elected in various ways being purely a matter for ar-

rangement in each individual canton.

The National Council and the Council of States sit as a rule independently, except in cases of national crisis like for example, war.

They do not represent an upper and a lower house as with our House of Commons and Senate, but on the contrary they are both on an equal footing and bills may be introduced in either of the houses simply because of reasons of practical convenience. All bills, however, have to be agreed upon by both assemblies.

The members of the National Council are elected for a term of three years. The members receive a salary of 35 francs per day (the Swiss franc has not depreciated like the French and Belgian francs and is equivalent to 19.3 cents Canadian). This is equivalent to \$6.75 per day. They also receive about 10 cents per kilometer for travelling expenses. The total cost of salaries and expenses for parliament in 1921 was less than \$170,000.

An election cannot be called by a party at any time to get a snap verdict. The time of parliament is set and no one party rules.

VARIOUS GROUPS

The Proportional Representation system of voting has produced the following groups in the National Swiss Council:

Catholic-Conservative party (172,000 votes).

Liberal-Conservative (23,000).

Radical-Democratic (220,000).

Peasants and Bourgeois (126,000)

Social Political (14,000).

Socialist (220,000).

Other Parties (27,000).

(The above figures are for 1928).

It is thus evident that all shades of opinion are properly represented according to their numerical strength. Each bill divides the house into conservative and radical groups according to the nature of the proposed legislation.

INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

The Swiss people have the right of direct legislation. They may introduce bills into parliament by gaining 50,000 signatures to the proposed legislation.

This power, together with the power to demand a referendum on a signature of 30,000 citizens, places Switzerland in the very front rank of democratic countries.

TAXATION

In matters of taxation Switzerland follows the principle that direct taxation is reserved for the various cantons, whilst the whole revenue derived from indirect taxation and especially from customs duties, goes to the confederation. The post, telegraphs, and mint are in the hands of the confederation.

CONSCRIPTION

Every Swiss citizen physically fit is bound to do military duty. But as he has the right to vote with his fellows as to whether his country goes to war or not, this is not of very great importance as the Swiss people are a peace loving, sensible, industrious race, and would never dream of attacking the British Empire, the United States of America, or even any weak savage tribe in darkest Africa. They mind their own business, and judging by their very progressive legislation, they mind it very well.

Canada could take many lessons from Switzerland which would be to the profit of the people.

Mrs E Brownell R.R. 1

Resolutions

Mrs Bonitz —

A Nations health is a nations wealth.

13 37 mothers, 2 or more children left -

Prenatal Case -

Mothers cultivate a little more selfishness

Explain to children the origin of birth.

Nothing unclean unless we make it so.

Bill of health physically & mentally by two medical examination

Miss Bridger — We live in a period of great social revolution
Challenge - to accuse & to summon

Failure of economics -

9000000 U. S. a. unemployed.

Short time double.

unemployed, why?

Improved machinery -

10000 tractors in last, each

released 2 men. Not using tractors

because they can't buy gasoline.

Turned our farmers into past

instead of marching forward.

gopher eating tribes.

Try to be thrifty and get penalized.

Increase in crime - 1925-17289

Criminals who get caught 24095

Criminals who don't get caught.

Clarence Darrow - greatest

Criminal lawyer in world.

37000000

3000 billion dollars -